



# Are God's Offices of Apostle and Prophet Being Misappropriated Today?

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In recent times, there has been a notable uptick in the usage of titles such as apostle and prophet by certain ministers who seemingly hunger for recognition and prominence. These individuals often adorn themselves with high-level designations, seeking to assert authority and command respect within religious circles. However, we must exercise caution and discernment in evaluating these claims. While [Ephesians 4:11-12](#) indeed acknowledges the roles of apostles and prophets in the early church for equipping and edifying believers, we must scrutinize whether the current proliferation of these titles aligns with the biblical precedent.

During the formative years of the church, the roles of apostle and prophet held significant sway. The office of apostle was entrusted to a select few individuals appointed directly by Christ through personal encounters, including the 12 disciples of Jesus, including Matthias who succeeded Judas, and the esteemed Apostle Paul, all directly chosen by Christ ([Mark 3:16-19](#)). These individuals lived until the end of the first century, which is why Paul still refers to this office as active in [Ephesians 4:11](#). The apostles, endowed with miraculous powers to validate their ministry and teachings, were instrumental in laying the foundational framework of the universal church, including the authorship of the New Testament Canon. For example, the apostle Paul told the church in Corinth they could trust his word over that of false teachers because his powers validated his ministry ([1 Cor. 4:18-19](#)). Paul told Corinth that those who claimed to have authority by their words must demonstrate they also possess the power that came with apostolic authority otherwise they were not legitimate authority figures in the church ([1 Cor. 4:20](#); [2 Cor. 13:10](#)). Such a test no longer exists in the church because with the completion of this foundation and passing of the apostolic era, marked by the death of the last apostle, John, at the close of the first century, the formal office of apostle ceased to function ([1 Cor. 3:11](#); [Ephesians 2:20](#)). In place of apostles, we have the full counsel of God's word.

Unfortunately, individuals, regardless of gender, who lack understanding of God's Word or are misled by false teachings, may seek to claim the title of apostle for themselves, reminiscent of false apostles in the early church. Additionally, it's essential to acknowledge that some may gain supernatural abilities through satanic influence, mimicking miraculous signs. However, genuine apostles were distinguished by unique spiritual gifts that validated their authority. While rare, the Lord may permit certain Christians to perform miracles, yet such occurrences should not be equated with the distinct validation of apostolic authority. However, distinct from the formal office, there existed a spiritual gift of apostleship, bestowed upon individuals such as James, Barnabas, Andronicus, Junias, Silas, Timothy, and Apollos. These individuals carried the authoritative message of the Gospel, sent forth by God ([1 Corinthians 15:7](#); [Romans 16:7](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#); [1 Corinthians 4:6](#)). However, it is prudent not to confuse these individuals with the apostles who held the formal office.

Similarly, the term "*prophet*" in the Bible refers to individuals gifted to convey God's revelations to humanity, with their words often becoming part of the canonical Scripture. This sacred office, in the Old Testament, came with significant responsibilities, as outlined in [Deuteronomy 13:1-5](#), where it's emphasized that prophets must be entirely accurate in their prophecies. Failure to meet this standard could result in severe consequences, even death, as mandated by Scripture. However, it is important to note that in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was exclusively bestowed upon prophets, empowering them to deliver divine revelations. This divine presence was a distinctive mark of the prophetic office, guiding and inspiring their words. With the advent of the New Testament, a transformative shift occurred: the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all believers, marking a new era of spiritual empowerment and communion with God. As such, in contemporary times, while all believers have access to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the traditional office of prophet, as seen in the Old Testament, no longer exists in the same manner. Prophets also played a vital role in the early church (intertestamental era), delivering divine messages until the completion of the New Testament Canon. In reality, the biblical office of prophet no longer exists in the church, since the Canon of Scripture has been completed. This is, however, not to be confused with the gift of prophecy.

Unfortunately, in the church today, many individuals claim to be prophets, but when tested against the biblical standard, they are often found to be deceivers. This cautionary tale is exemplified in [Jeremiah 14:13-15](#), where false prophets misled the people with promises of peace amidst impending disaster. However, the Lord may bring supernatural insight concerning future events to anyone at any time, but such a moment doesn't mean the person has become a prophet in the biblical sense. It simply means God has chosen to reveal something to them at a point in time for a certain purpose. This type of prophecy shouldn't be mistaken for the office of prophet.

However, the contemporary usage of the title "prophet" often diverges from the biblical model, with some individuals seeking personal recognition and authority rather than humbly serving God's purposes. The current teaching advocating for the restoration of these offices often strays from the biblical precedent, demanding unwavering allegiance and claiming infallibility. This stands in stark contrast to the humility exemplified by the apostles and prophets of old. The Apostle Paul commended the Bereans for scrutinizing his teachings against Scripture ([Acts 17:10-11](#)) and warned against preaching a contrary gospel ([Galatians 1:8-9](#)).

The historical context of apostleship and prophecy reveals a profound humility exemplified by those who held these positions. The apostles and prophets of old were not driven by personal ambition or self-aggrandizement but were solely dedicated to serving God's purposes and advancing His kingdom. Regrettably, the contemporary usage of these titles often diverges from this humble example. Many who lay claim to the titles of apostle and prophet exhibit characteristics more aligned with self-promotion than with the selfless devotion exemplified by their biblical counterparts. Instead of serving as vessels of God's message, some individuals wield these titles as badges of honor, demanding unquestioning obedience and reverence from their followers. This departure from the biblical model is cause for concern. The Apostle Paul, in [Acts 17:10-11](#), commended the Bereans for diligently examining his teachings against Scripture to ensure their fidelity. Likewise, in [Galatians 1:8-9](#), Paul issued a stern warning against anyone, including himself, preaching a gospel contrary to the established truth. Moreover, the Scriptures consistently refer to apostles and prophets in the past tense ([2 Peter 3:2](#); [Jude 3-4](#); [Hebrews 2:3-4](#)), underscoring their historical significance rather than implying an ongoing presence in the church. Therefore, as we navigate the complexities of our faith journey, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to Scripture as the ultimate authority. Let us humbly discern the genuine leading of the Holy Spirit amidst the clamor of titles and self-proclaimed offices, ensuring that our allegiance is solely to God and His revealed truth.

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